

VZCZCXRO3841
RR RUEHPW
DE RUEHBUL #1892/01 2050537
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 230537Z JUL 08
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4838
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 001892

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, EUR/RPM
NSC FOR WOOD
OSD FOR WILKES
CENTCOM FOR CG CSTC-A, CG CJTF-101 POLAD

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ECON](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: BAMYAN PROVINCE: IMPROVING GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY

11. (SBU) Summary: Bamyan Governor Sarabi appears to be growing weary of the jockeying over her post and may be open to changing jobs. The Provincial Development Council has proven itself capable of producing a coordinated development strategy. PRT Bamyan is considering improving several districts' security ratings from amber to green, but insurgent activity in neighboring provinces and the Hazara-Kuchi ethnic conflict threatens stability in the province.

Governance: Governor May Be Growing Tired

12. (SBU) As a governor with no party affiliation, Habiba Sarabi has few political allies. Her base remains the support she gets from the people of Bamyan and her high profile in the international community. Despite her successes, perceptions that she has failed to attract large-scale development projects have undercut her popularity. Political detractors and those with interests in the governorship perpetuate these perceptions. Afghan commentators as well as the local population speculate on her replacement. The Governor herself is showing more signs of weariness and possible willingness to move on to a new position, if a suitable position is offered. The Governor made a successful and well-publicized first visit to New Zealand in March, but the Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) denied several other requests for official international travel (IDLG is concerned about governors who spend too little time in their provinces, but Sarabi's high international profile may also have been a factor).

13. (SBU) Bamyan has a new Director of Information and Culture. This is a critical position; the Department of Information and Culture is central to Bamyan's tourism and economic development efforts. The new director, Najibullah Ihrar, a Tajik, was head of the same department in Parwan and Baghlan provinces.

14. (SBU) Bamyan ministry representatives remain weak, but with the support of the PRT and UNAMA, they have made strides toward improved planning and coordination. After intensive efforts and consultations with Kabul ministries, IDLG, and the Afghan National Development Strategy, the Provincial Development Committee (PDC) finalized the Provincial Development Plan (PDP). The PDC, comprised of provincial line ministers, members of the Provincial Council, and international organizations, is the main development planning body in the province. The new PDP will provide visibility and accountability of on-going and planned projects and is a prioritized and vetted list for donors.

15. (SBU) A new USG-funded Civil Service Training Center trains over 60 civil servants for six months on management, English, and computers. The Civil Service Commission Priority Reform and Restructuring program continues to grapple with the problems

affecting the civil service. Lack of oversight and accountability, lack of connection to the central government, and politically motivated appointments continue to prevent significant progress in the civil service, including at the district levels.

Development: New Roads and Other Projects

¶6. (U) The new east-west road connecting Bamyan to Yakawlang district is the most significant, visible project in Bamyan. The Japanese-funded, USD 20 million, 97-km road will be the first large-scale infrastructure project in Bamyan. The contractors are on the ground and have begun surveying. Work will begin in summer 2008 and will continue for three years.

¶7. (SBU) Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funding remains focused on roads, schools, clinics, and access to potable water. The Singaporean Armed Forces, with six civil-military personnel, are in their second building season with the New Zealand PRT. They are currently working on two medium-sized projects in the center of Bamyan and want to expand their development program. All projects are closely coordinated with the Provincial Development Council. Singapore has increased the number of troops and projects as well as completed a new Status of Forces Agreement with ISAF. The USAID Local Governance and Community Development program is renewing its efforts in Bamyan. After a troubled start, the program has regained focus, hiring additional local staff and reaching into the districts.

¶8. (U) The Agha Khan Development Network remains the largest implementer in Bamyan with 11 international staff and hundreds of local staff. They focus on projects that support capacity-building

KABUL 00001892 002 OF 002

and community contributions. Catholic Relief Services also recently opened offices in Bamyan.

Security: Improving from Amber to Green

¶9. (SBU) The PRT continues to assess two of seven districts at security code amber. The two districts - Khamard and Shibar- are located in the northern parts of Bamyan. Insurgent influence into Khamard from Baghlan's Tala-wa Barfak District remains a significant concern. In late June, IEDs in Parwan Province highlighted new perils on the primary ground route between Bamyan and Kabul. As a result of the attacks, UNAMA and the international NGOs suspended all ground transport to Bamyan from Kabul.

¶10. (SBU) The PRT underwent a review of its current threat state and will lower the threat level in Bamyan and Sayghan districts to green. Since May 2008, the PRT has seen decreased threat reporting on IEDs, and there has been a decrease in violent crime. A green designation allows PRT personnel to travel with fewer armed soldiers. The local community notices the difference, and it makes it easier for patrols to interact with the local population. The lower resource requirements also allow PRT personnel to attend more meetings and engage in more activities.

¶11. (SBU) Chief of Police General Ewaz is effective when he is present, but he has a pattern of frequent and long absences. The New Zealand Police mentor assesses General Ewaz as having made significant progress in leadership command and putting management controls into place. The biggest problem with the police remains the quantity and quality of personnel. Rank reform efforts and the demands of police training programs in other parts of the country have prompted the Ministry of Interior (MOI) to pull personnel from Bamyan. For example, the Bamyan Regional Training Center (training capacity of 90 students) recently lost four of its Criminal Investigation Division instructors to a larger facility in Herat province. (In the past, MOI has been hard-pressed to fill instructor positions at training facilities around the country; however, it has been preparing over 200 new instructors and is rapidly closing the gap.) In the transition to the new tashkil (staffing plan) for Afghan Year 1387 (2008-2009), the allocation of police positions to Panjab district has gone from 40 to 27 ANP without taking into account the seasonal Kuchi migration (see para 12), which brings an influx of armed nomads into the district.

However, the overall authorization for Bamyan rose from 706 to 756 positions, and COP Ewaz remains empowered to deploy his force within the province as needed.

¶12. (SBU) The Kuchi (Afghan, Pashtun nomads) migration to the Hazara areas of Wardak's Behsood district and southern Bamyan is a continuing concern. Provincial officials deem the central government's efforts to resolve the conflict to be overly politicized, with political parties choosing sides based on electoral calculations. Despite some deep wounds from previous Kuchi atrocities, the Hazara maintain a nuanced view of the Kuchi. They acknowledge some have legitimate land rights in Bamyan, but they insist Kuchi landowners take up residence on the land and become members of the community. They also insist the pasture lands owned by Kuchi should only be used by the owners and their families, not offered as open grazing land to all Kuchi, a practice which exhausts the pasture lands. The Hazara objection to the large groups of armed Kuchi stems from their prior experiences of the Kuchi acting as a proxy for the Pashtun and Taliban penetration into Hazarajat. Fighting has already begun between heavily armed Kuchi and Hazara in the Behsood districts of Wardak province bordering Bamyan, but has not spread into adjacent provinces.

WOOD